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SUBJECT: AEC PLENARY MEETING - October 27, 2007

REF: Khartounm 1679

¶1. SUMMARY: AEC Chairman Tom Vraalsen convened a special session of the AEC plenary on October 27 to discuss how the AEC can best move forward. The AEC Coordinators proposed this meeting to address the changed playing field after the SPLM suspended its participation in the Government in mid October. He urged the two sides to agree on a detailed action plan with clear objectives and timelines for implementation. In their statements, the NCP and SPLM each recapitulated their positions as to who bears responsibility for slowing progress on CPA implementation, but each affirmed their determination to make progress, and their dedication to the AEC process. In turn, representatives of each of the Working Group Coordinators urged the two parties to move forward in a problem-solving mode, and pledged that they stand ready to provide technical and other assistance to the two parties. END SUMMARY.

¶2. AEC Chairman Tom Vraalsen opened the meeting by urging both the SPLM and the to focus on the way forward and tackle the remaining obstacles to agreement with a problem-solving mindset. The two sides should work to produce an action plan, with clear objectives and timelines for implementation. Vraalsen voiced satisfaction "for the support expressed to the AEC in recent days" from a number of sources, highlighting the recent statement supporting the AEC by Vice President Taha.

NCP and SPLM state commitment to CPA, AEC

¶3. The SPLM delegates spoke first. The "action plan" the Chairman had requested, they said, had been presented already in the form of a list of demands to the NCP. The SPLM reiterated that it would not return to the Government until its demands were met. In response, the NCP rejected the SPLM's implication that the NCP was solely responsible for the lack of progress. The only way forward was to continue working through the partnership created by the CPA and its various agencies and institutions. Chief among these bodies was the Council of Ministers. The NCP urged the SPLM to immediately return to the Government.

¶4. The two sides disagreed over a listing of areas for CPA implementation which the NCP said had been worked out between State Minister Idris Abdelgadir (NCP) and State Minister Telar Deng (SPLM). The NCP said that the understanding reached over the list, dated September 18, 2007, was that the two sides would begin work immediately after the Eid break, through weekly meetings of the Presidency. The SPLM disputed the validity of that list, saying that it was the initiative of two persons and had not been endorsed by the First Vice President (Satva Ik2)-
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